

RESOURCE 5: ROLE DESCRIPTIONS AND RECRUITMENT TO ALLIED HEALTH RURAL GENERALIST TRAINING POSITIONS

OVERVIEW

This document provides information to support organisations to develop appropriate content for an Allied Health Rural Generalist Training Position (AHRG Training Position) role description and information on strategies to assist successful recruitment.

ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

Before developing a role description or progressing recruitment processes for an AHRG Training Position refer to AHRGP Resource 4: Establishing Allied Health Rural Generalist Training Positions.

The document provides guidance on AHRG Training Position role requirements and associated resource implication, assessing workplace suitability for an AHRG Training Position, the benefits of implementing a position, and key questions to consider before establishing a position.

The role description for an AHRG Training Position should be consistent with that for other positions at an equivalent level in the work unit, with the following recommended variations:

- **Title:** include "Rural Generalist Training Position" in the title. For example, Podiatrist (Rural Generalist Training Position).
- **Employment term and rural generalist education program engagement:** The role description needs to specify education program/s that must be completed as a requirement of the employment terms. At present the Rural Generalist Program and the Graduate Diploma of Rural Generalist Practice, delivered by James Cook University are the main education program options for rural generalist trainees. The position holder can complete Level 1 (12-24 months, certificate of completion, 6 credit points) or Level 2 (24 months part-time study, Graduate Diploma, 24 credit points). The position holder can also complete both articulated levels (up to 36 months part-time study, Graduate Diploma).

The articulated dual level program, commencing in the level 1 program, is appropriate for graduate and early career practitioners (up to 3 years) as it provides additional support and time for completion of training equivalent to the first 6 credit points in the program. This may support the early career professional to balance Rural Generalist Program requirements with other consolidation and learning required in the early practice period.

More experienced practitioners (greater than 2 years' professional experience) are likely to be more suited to direct entry into the Graduate Diploma course. The support to be provided (including the duration of allocated development time and resourcing) should be made explicit in recruitment and employment documentation.

- **Employment status:** The role may be temporary or permanent, depending on the funding arrangements.
- **Full time or part time:** Ideally the position will be full time. Part time positions may be feasible although consideration needs to be given to the balance between clinical practice and development time. It is unlikely a fraction less than 0.5 FTE will be feasible.
- **Profession:** The JCU Level 1 Rural Generalist Program currently includes profession-specific training options for medical imaging, nutrition and dietetics, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry, speech pathology, social work and psychology.



Other professions can enrol in inter-professional modules which account for more than half of the program and augment their profession-specific clinical development with other training programs and work-based learning with their supervisor.

Recognising that requirements for developing role descriptions will vary for each organisation, the following are recommendations for statements to include in the role description if the format allows.

- **Opportunity section:** This section should reference the components of the AHRG Training Position including supports, training and value of the process.

Example: "As an early career professional, participate in a supported two-year rural generalist development program in <<profession>> that includes support provided by an experienced profession-specific local supervisor, a development plan with allocated development time, a formal training and assessment process, and participation in service development activities that will build rural generalist practice skills."

- This section should also establish the bounds of the additional support and designated rural generalist training time and funding.

Example: "Participation and completion of an approved rural generalist education program for this profession is a requirement of the Allied Health Rural Generalist Training Position. The training position provides enhanced development opportunities to support entry into rural practice, with the position reverting to a standard <<level>>, <<profession>> position at completion of the program or 30 months following commencement, whichever occurs sooner."

- **Role and responsibilities section:** The section should include reference to the role of the AHRG Training Position incumbent in service development work associated with the role's implementation.

Example: "Participate in the development of innovative rural generalist service development strategies that meet the healthcare needs of clients in <<name of service/region>>."

- **Role and responsibilities section continued:** The role / responsibilities section of the role description should also include reference to the position's mandatory engagement in training and development.

Example: "Participate in training and development requirements of the role as defined in the rural generalist development plan and negotiated with managers."

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

When recruiting to an AHRG Training Position, the following should be considered during the recruitment process:

- Providing targeted information to universities for their final year student group (If applicable).
- Providing targeted information to employees completing their graduate year or second year of practice in a regional or metropolitan service, or in another rural or remote service.
- Directly promoting the AHRG Training Position to:
 - Final year students who completed placements in the local team in the previous 12 months.
 - Early career locums employed in the team.
 - Early career professionals currently employed in temporary positions in the team or other services in the region.

Targeted strategies are particularly recommended for 'hard to fill' professions such as podiatry and medical imaging. These professions are characterised by comparatively few pre-entry training programs, lower graduate numbers and strong competition between public, private and non-



government health employers. Promotion and active engagement with early career practitioners in these groups is required to address recruitment challenges.

Organisations wishing to target university graduates may wish to link with university clinical education coordinators or university departments of rural health to request dissemination of information or to seek opportunities to address students. If there is a local coordinating role such as through the local health district, Primary Health Network (PHN) or rural health workforce agency for AHRG Training Positions, they may be able to assist with links to university contacts and advise on other AHRG Training Position recruitment drives in progress.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Allied Health Rural Generalist Pathway is a collaborative initiative comprising a broad variety of organisations across the Australian and New Zealand healthcare sectors. The full list of organisations is available on the SARRAH website at www.sarrah.org.au.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Resources relevant to AHRG Training Positions and the Rural Generalist Program are available through SARRAH at www.sarrah.org.au. SARRAH can provide advice to healthcare providers, commissioning agencies and other stakeholders to support scoping, development and implementation of the AHRGP.